

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, November 23, 1896, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington D.C. November 23, 1896. My dear Alec:

The invitations are pouring in and my heart is sinking into my boots. Of course this is what I want and Elsie is only distressed that Mrs. Pollok has nine to our six or seven for the first week in December, but still it bodes such a fearfully hardwinter and I am so tired already. I begin, however, to be encouraged about Elsie. She will never be able to dress herself alone, but she is certainly developing a talent for seeing very clearly what she wants and knowing how to set about getting it. I think she will have great executive ability and know how to get other people to do things for her. I should judge that she is carrying on her Friday afternoon sociable for the Peck Chapel Sunday School children, herself arranging the programmes and directing the other girls. Mrs. Pollok says she has improved very greatly in her French and her teacher gives her few bad marks.

Papa repeated a story this evening told him of Talmage, apropos of the little knowledge men have of the meaning even of well known scientific propositions outside their own line of study.

In an address to the Convention of Ministers this morning Talmage announced that he did not believe in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, for if it were true why was Garfield killed and his murderer survive! That was what he thought was meant by the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. My father also informed me that many years ago when Leland Stanford moved into his house he found several bookshelves into which his books would not fit, so he immediately sent an order for so many yards of books the right size. He admitted that he thought I might do worse than follow Mr. Stanford's example and fill the gaping voids in my shelves. Perhaps I better spend my money filling up my library. I am

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very much pleased, I find I will be able to furnish my parlor at very much less expense than I expected. Then I can have some old silk dresses remodeled so that I will only need one entirely new evening dress.

Over five hundred and fifty invitations have been sent out and most of the cards you know are Mr. and Mrs. I am not as much alarmed as I would be if Charles did not assure me we have had 500 in the 19th St. house. The people are nearly all people whose names have always been on my list and who would think themselves slighted if not invited to meet your daughter.

Lovingly ever, Mabel.